

Greetings Gold Families!

## Team Events and Updates

**Our testing schedule for PARCC and MCAS is now out.** [You can access the schedule here.](#) It is important that all of our students do their best to be here on testing days; we appreciate your help in making this happen.

The **annual Walk for Hunger will be held in Boston, on Sunday May 1st.** 8 Gold is proud to be participating in this event for our 11th year -- over this time, we have raised almost \$100,000 to help the needy in this state, as well as the KPJ Foundation here in Shrewsbury. So far, we have 20 registered walkers and we have raised a little over \$1000 - a good start, but we're a long way from our goal... last year, our team raised over \$18,000 -- a new record for our team. *We strongly encourage all of you to join us for the walk, or help out in any way you can.* Many students - at the end of the year - report that this event was the most memorable experience of the year, and many of our alumni come back year after year to catch up on times, share memories, and continue giving back to their communities. **If you are interested in joining our team for the walk, or simply wish to make a donation on our behalf, please go to** <http://support.projectbread.org/goto/8Gold> for information and to register. Students are encouraged to bring friends and family -- you can read more about this great event in [our FAQ](#). In the coming days, we will be sending home more specific information regarding where we meet in Boston, and ways to help out.

**T2 Report Cards are coming out this week.** We ask that you take a few minutes to review this important document with your child, and help them set goals for the rest of the year. If your child has any questions, encourage them to come speak with us.

## Class Updates

**Learning Skills:** During the third trimester, students in Learning Skills continue to develop and are encouraged to use their advocacy skills as they prepare for high school. Coming into Learning Skills with specific questions is an essential skill to master throughout the 8th grade. Students should be utilizing "Schoology" daily to assist them to locate materials, recall of due dates and obtain materials in order to assist them to complete homework assignments in each of their content area classes. As we prepare for the PARCC and MCAS testing, students will be informed and reminded of their accommodations. Additionally, students have viewed parts of the movie "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in order to preview the play, more specifically the characters, setting and plot, which they will begin reading and analyzing in ELA. In the small group setting students continue to receive support dependant upon their individual needs.

**Science:** Students are currently learning about energy and energy transformations. A big focus of this unit is on roller coasters because they're the perfect examples of potential and kinetic energy transformations. Students learned about the old White City Amusement Park here in Shrewsbury, and

then built their own functioning roller coasters last week using marbles and foam pipe insulation. They will begin a project tomorrow that has them research a real roller coaster. Their goal will be to identify energy transformations taking place throughout the ride.

**Social Studies:** We are currently exploring various characteristics of the Italian Renaissance that include Art, Architecture, Politics etc. Students will be working together in various group exercises and projects throughout this unit. Additionally, the unit will conclude with a persuasive essay in which students will identify what they consider the most important legacy of the Renaissance and describe why with various historical facts. As always, the overall goal of this unit is to connect various modern day concepts of the Renaissance to our society. **I also strongly advise students keep up with their various quiz grades and homework. In January, I implemented a new testing policy for assessment retakes. For students to qualify for a retake on a unit assessment they must achieve a 80% average on both quizzes and homework. Quizzes are always open on Schoology and can be retaken as many times as necessary.**

**ELA:** Students completed their 8 week, combined ELA - SS research paper on medieval feudalism last week, submitting their papers on Wednesday and the final Crispin assessment by Thursday night.

We now turn our attention to Elizabethan drama. As I mentioned in an earlier email, **I strongly recommend that students pick up a cheap copy to write in** - it's a minor investment that really can help their success. [You can find my recommended copies here.](#) Many students have already picked their copies - if there is a delay in the shipment of yours, no worry - just let me know and I can arrange for a loaner copy until yours comes in. If you prefer to use a library copy, that is ok - it just means your child will need to be extremely well organized in their annotations.

During this unit, students will be in acting companies, where they will perform the play in their own words, in modern English. This is a highly interactive unit, with lots of acting and participation -- it is important students work diligently on their paraphrases, and pace themselves, and work collaboratively with their peers. I have made many supports available - you can read about the full unit in [my Livebinder](#). I strongly encourage students to work together, to read sections out loud and help one another with these paraphrases - drama is a group effort, it isn't meant to be read alone and in silence! You'll see the fruits of their hard work in the full-length DVD production at the end of the year...

**Math:** We have wrapped up our work on the two geometry-based units, *Looking for Pythagoras* and *Butterflies, Pinwheels, and Hubcaps* and have started work in our *It's in the System* unit, which focuses on systems of linear equations. This unit builds on the work that we have done with linear equations earlier in the year. Students are currently learning different methods for solving systems of linear equations with two variables (graphing, substitution, and elimination/linear combination) and how to use systems of equations to solve real world applications. As we continue in this unit, we will

also explore linear inequalities and do some work with systems of linear inequalities. If your student finds that they are struggling during this unit, please encourage them to attend an after school help session.

So, there you have it... Enjoy the upcoming April break; get out in the warmth and spend some time with the family -- and hope to see you all at the Walk for Hunger!

8 Gold Team Teachers